

IOWA OUTDOORS

Iowa Department of Natural Resources
www.iowadnr.com

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March 11, 2003

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ANNUAL NORTHERN PIKE, WALLEYE COLLECTION TO START SOON

DES MOINES –Workers at the DNR’s fish hatcheries are preparing for the busy season that begins in a few short weeks. The nets are ready. The boats are being checked along with safety equipment.

In a few short weeks, DNR fisheries personnel will begin netting northern pike in the Guttenberg area of the Mississippi River. Then the effort will turn to lakes and collecting walleyes.

The DNR stocked more than 123 million walleye, northern pike and muskies in public waters in 2002, and if the weather and fish cooperate, the DNR hopes to duplicate it this year.

Northern pike netting begins soon after the ice goes off the Mississippi River near Guttenberg and the water temperature is near 40 degrees. The pike collected will be striped of their eggs and released back into the river. The eggs will incubate for about 3 weeks before hatching. Some of the newly hatched fry will be released into northeast Iowa streams and the Mississippi River; the rest will be shipped to Spirit Lake and allowed to grow to 3 inches. The 3-inch fingerlings will be stocked in May in rivers and lakes in northern Iowa.

After the pike netting is complete, the focus turns to walleye netting. The work first begins at Clear and Storm lakes, then a few days later at Spirit, East and West Okoboji and Rathbun.

Walleye will be collected during the night in early April. Crews begin setting nets around sunset and will check the nets twice each night – once around 9 p.m. and again around midnight. The eggs will be removed and the fish released. The process can last from a week to 10 days.

The majority of the 122 million walleye are stocked as fry shortly after hatching. As many as 6.5 million fry will be moved to Sprit Lake, Rathbun and Mt. Ayr, and allowed to grow. These fish will be stocked during the year ranging from 2 inches up to 8 inches.

At Spirit Lake, muskies will be collected along with walleyes. Muskies will be surveyed at East and West Okoboji and Clear Lake for growth and recapture data.

Collecting fish is a labor intensive process done during hours when most people are settling in for the night. There are a lot of factors that affect the collection including weather and water temperature. There are other factors that can influence the process after the fish are collected.

Mike Mason, supervisor for the DNR fish hatcheries, is concerned about the water level at Lake Rathbun. The lake level is down which means less water can flow into the hatchery.

“Rathbun is one of our bigger producers of channel catfish, walleye, largemouth bass and flatheads,” Mason said. “The low water level of Lake Rathbun means less water is being forced through the pipes into the hatchery. We’re looking at a few options if low water in the lake becomes an issue.”

The Mt. Ayr and Fairport fish hatcheries are also experiencing below normal water levels.

For more information, contact Mason at 515-281-6072.

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**HUNTING SEASONS SET; WATERFOWL SEASONS PROPOSED
FOR 2003 - 2004**

DES MOINES – The Natural Resource Commission (NRC) approved most hunting season dates for 2003 – 2004 at its February meeting. The waterfowl and fall turkey hunting seasons will be finalized at the Commission's August meeting.

The season dates are as follows:

Upland Game, Deer and Turkey

Youth Pheasant – Oct. 18 to 19
Pheasant – Oct. 25 to Jan. 10, 2004
Bobwhite Quail – Oct. 25 to Jan. 31, 2004
Gray Partridge – Oct. 11 to Jan. 31, 2004
Ruffed Grouse – Oct. 4 to Jan. 31, 2004
Rabbit (Cottontail) – Sept. 1 to Feb. 28, 2004
Rabbit (Jack) – Oct. 25 to Dec. 1
Squirrel (Fox and Gray) – Sept. 1 to Jan. 31, 2004
Groundhog – June 15 to Oct. 31
Crow – Oct. 15 to Nov. 30 and Jan. 14 to March 31, 2004
Pigeon (firearms) – Oct. 1 to March 31, 2004
Pigeon (trapping) – Continuous open season
Turkey (gun / bow) – April 14 to 17, April 18 to 22 (Iowa residents only), April 23 to 29, and April 30 to May 18
Turkey (bow only) – April 14 to May 18
Deer – Youth and Disabled Hunter Season – Sept. 20 to Oct. 5
Deer – Archery – Oct. 1 to Dec. 5, and Dec. 22 to Jan. 10, 2004
Deer – Early Muzzleloader – Oct. 11 to 19
Deer – Late Muzzleloader – Dec. 22 to Jan. 10, 2004
Deer – First Shotgun – Dec. 6 to 10
Deer – Second Shotgun – Dec. 13 to 21
Deer – Special Late Season – Jan. 11 to 19, 2004

Proposed Fall Turkey Season – Oct. 13 to Dec. 5

Proposed Migratory Game Bird and Waterfowl Seasons

North Zone

Ducks (except Canvasbacks and Pintails), Coots and Mergansers – Sept. 20 to 22 and Oct. 18 to Nov. 28
Canvasback Ducks – Closed Season
Pintails – Sept. 20 to 22 and Oct. 18 to Nov. 13
Youth Waterfowl Days – Oct. 11 to 12
Canada Geese, White-fronted Geese and Brant – Oct. 4 to Dec. 12

South Zone

Ducks (except Canvasbacks and Pintails), Coots and Mergansers – Oct. 4 to 6, and Oct. 25 to Dec. 5
Canvasback Ducks – Closed Season
Pintails – Oct. 4 to 6 and Oct. 25 to Nov. 20

Youth Waterfowl Days – Sept. 27 to 28
Canada Geese, White-fronted Geese and Brant – Oct. 4 to 26 and Nov. 8 to Dec. 24

Proposed Special Zone Canada Goose Season – Des Moines, Cedar Rapids, Iowa City

Canada Geese only – Sept. 1 to 15

Proposed Statewide Waterfowl and Migratory Game Bird Seasons

Snow Geese (White and Blue phase) and Ross' Geese – Oct. 4 to Jan. 18, 2004 and Jan. 19, 2004 to April 15, 2004

Woodcock – Oct. 4 to Nov. 17

Snipe – Sept. 6 to Nov. 30

Rails (Sora and Virginia) – Sept. 6 to Nov. 14

Furbearer Hunting Seasons

Raccoon and Opossum – Nov. 1 to Jan. 31, 2004

Fox (Red and Gray) – Nov. 1 to Jan. 31, 2004

Coyote – Continuous open season

Furbearer Trapping Seasons

Mink, Muskrat, Raccoon, Weasel, Striped Skunk, Badger, Opossum, Fox (Red and Gray) and Coyote – Nov. 1 to Jan. 31, 2004

Beaver – Nov. 1 to April 15, 2004

Spotted Skunk (Civet Cat), Bobcat, Otter – Continuous closed season

Falconry – Proposed Migratory Game Bird and Waterfowl Hunting Seasons

Ducks and Coots – North Zone – Sept. 20 to 22, Oct. 18 to Nov. 28, Dec. 15 to Feb. 14, 2004. The season is open during the firearms season for ducks and coots from Dec. 15 until the total days of hunting equals 107 or Feb. 28, whichever comes first.

Ducks and Coots – South Zone – Oct. 4 to 6, Oct. 25 to Dec. 5, Dec. 15 to Feb. 14, 2004. The season is open during the firearms season for ducks and coots and from Dec. 15 until the total days of hunting equals 107 or Feb. 28, whichever comes first.

Geese – North Zone – Oct. 4 to Jan. 18, 2004

Geese – South Zone – Oct. 4 to Jan. 18, 2004

Rails (Sora and Virginia) – Sept. 6 to Dec. 21

Snipe – Sept. 6 to Dec. 21

Woodcock – Oct. 4 to Jan. 18, 2004

Falconry Hunting Seasons – Small Game

Pheasant (both sexes), Quail, Gray Partridge, Ruffed Grouse and Jack Rabbit – Oct. 1 to March 31, 2003

Cottontail Rabbit and Squirrel – Sept. 1 to March 31, 2004

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PROTECT THE LAND BY PLANTING A FOREST

DES MOINES - Spring will be here soon and for landowners with available land, now is the time to make plans to plant a forest. Forests help prevent soil erosion, improve water quality, filter the air and provide wildlife food and cover.

Open fields along streams, hillsides and field edges are excellent locations to create new forests by planting native trees and shrubs. Conservation grade seedlings are inexpensive and easy to plant.

For more information on ordering, planting and care of seedlings, check the web site www.iowadnr.com/forestry/ or call 800 865-2477.

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WILDLIFE DIVERSITY CHECK OFF LAGS

By Joe Wilkinson

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Wildlife and tax season. You wouldn't suspect that one depends much on the other, but it's not hard to make the connection. It's right there on line 59A of your Iowa tax form; the Fish & Wildlife Protection Fund.

Every dollar raised through the voluntary check off goes to Iowa's Wildlife Diversity program. Located within the Department of Natural Resources' wildlife bureau, the program focuses on the nongame' critters; everything from meadowlarks to Dakota skippers to peregrine falcons and river otters and the habitat they need to survive.

"The check off is still our most important source of revenue," explains Wildlife Diversity coordinator Doug Harr, with the DNR. "And it has fallen over the years." It has dropped to the extent that there is no 'fat' to cut. Popular wildlife monitoring and restoration efforts have disappeared or were handed off to volunteers as the cuts hit 'bone'. Introduced 20 years ago as 'the Chickadee Checkoff', the program pretty well paid its own way. "We would see over \$200,000 a year in those early years," recalls Harr. "We have been averaging about \$135,000 for the past several years, although it did take a little (\$7,000) bump upwards *last* year.

It's not like the demand for services has dropped. The public still calls for programs and publications. Private and public areas continue with a growing need for native habitat and improvements for endangered or slowly diminishing bird, reptile, insect and mammal species. There's just not enough money to scale that mountain of

demands and needs. Most people don't realize that hunting licenses and related excise taxes fund *game* species which, in turn, provide food and recreation. When dwindling check off dollars fall short, it is the hunter—and furharvester for that matter—who foot the bill again.

As we head toward our April tax filing deadline, Harr and conservationists around the state are reminding us not to forget the check off. "It's been the backbone of the Nongame (now Wildlife Diversity) program for years," stresses Loren Forbes. Forbes, of Iowa City, is vice-president of the Iowa Wildlife Federation, which administered the DNR's peregrine falcon trust fund, and now a similar trumpeter swan fund. "The swan program was fortunate to eventually attract a private benefactor to pick up a large share of the expenses," admits Forbes. "But it was the check off that brought the swan back to return it to Iowa wetlands after more than a century."

Those check off dollars don't come easy, either. For one thing, it now competes with two others on Iowa's tax forms. As they were added several years ago, an immediate drop-off occurred as people spread their contributions around. And things are still slow. "For some reason, there has been a drop off this tax season. Maybe it's because of the economy? I don't know," observes Certified Public Accountant Tim Broghammer, noting that a check off contribution does come out of your refund or eventual tax payment. "It seems that people who are big into hunting do contribute. Some others do, too. Some don't."

What do you get for your check off dollars? The magnificent trumpeter is probably the 'showiest' critter in the wildlife diversity lineup. "It's one that people recognize, now that we are about 10 years into restoration," notes Harr. "Before that, river otters caught our attention. A more recent effort has been the re-introduction of ospreys, on the Coralville and Saylorville Reservoirs and on the Cedar River in Waterloo. We also will be studying the bobcat, as it makes a slow comeback. We plan to plant transmitters on some this spring to radio-track their movements; to learn more about them."

And in the scrap for federal funding, your check off could count twice. The Omnibus Appropriations Bill approved by Congress in February included \$732,000 in State Wildlife Grants for Iowa. It will be divvied up among a variety of programs, but some will go to Wildlife Diversity. "We are still faced with getting the 1:1 state match, though", warns Harr. "That's critical. You could basically double your check off dollars if we can utilize them to match federal dollars."

It's a tough sell; a tight economy...competing check offs. But the dollars go beyond 'just' helping wildlife. They restore natural areas. They give us a chance to see something, wild...and different. They help return the diversity of our land, even if just in patches, instead of the awesome rolling miles that greeted—and threatened—early Iowa settlers.

Bird Conservation Areas Focus in Future Years

Wildlife diversity funding, thin as it is, will help spread the slowly growing concept of Bird Conservation Areas (BCAs) in Iowa.

The areas can be hundreds, and perhaps someday thousands, of acres with habitat and wildlife management focused on restoring bird species threatened in their Iowa nesting range. "Of course, prairie chickens are the focus at our first area, near Kellerton in southwest Iowa. Henslow's sparrows are a concern, too," explains Doug Harr, Wildlife Diversity Program Coordinator for the DNR. Three other areas are targeted for development, now; ranging from Broken Kettle Prairie near Sioux City, to Spring Run wetland near Spirit Lake, and the timbered bluffs of Yellow River Forest-Effigy Mounds in northeast Iowa.

Each landform offers specific features relied upon by the declining bird species. "Many people recognize the redheaded woodpecker," says Harr. "It actually is in decline in our woodlands. The cerulean warbler is a possible candidate for endangered species listing. We see these BCAs as focus areas for species in trouble. At Broken Kettle, grassland species like grasshopper sparrows and meadowlarks will benefit. At Spring Run, various wetland species will be helped."

Biologists are quick to point out that restoring habitat for nongame species also benefits a host of others; feathered and non-feathered; game and nongame. The larger BCA acreages also reduce 'fragmenting' that has led to the downfall of many species.

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FEDERAL GRANTS AID IOWA WILDLIFE PROGRAMS

Iowa's wildlife stands to benefit from a new \$732,213 federal grant, part of the 2003 Omnibus Appropriations Act passed by Congress and signed by President Bush in late February. Intended to protect wildlife and habitat nationwide, the State Wildlife Grant program allocates \$65 million to be divided among all states and Native American tribes. An equal amount of non-federal money must be used to match the federal grant, this generally coming from state revenues or private contributions.

Iowa's congressional delegation was nearly unanimous in approving this year's appropriations bill. While the \$65 million State Wildlife Grant compromise appropriation was well below a \$100 million request in the U.S. House version, it is considered a victory to secure any funding for wildlife conservation, especially as the nation's economy struggles.

This marks the third consecutive year Congress has provided annual appropriations for wildlife grants to states. Action providing more desirable long-term aid to state wildlife has been stalled for the past few years, so annual grants were

promised until more permanent funding might be enacted. Congress's efforts to provide appropriations again this year makes good on the pledge of interim state assistance.

"Iowa has put federal grants from 2001 and 2002 to excellent use," said Doug Harr, Wildlife Diversity Program Coordinator for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. "The DNR has protected critical habitat for prairie-chickens and declining forest birds, initiated a research project to gather information about elusive Iowa bobcats, and assisted university research projects on grassland bird habitats and interactions of birds and bats with wind generation facilities. Projects that preserve Iowa's grasslands and associated bird communities will be DNR's top priority in spending the 2003 federal funds. Additional projects are proposed to continue Trumpeter Swan restoration, reprint an educational booklet about Iowa's bats, and protect habitat valuable to migrating Bald Eagles."

Harr said much of this important wildlife conservation work would not have been possible without financial assistance from private donations. "We have partnered with Audubon chapters, Pheasants Forever, the National Wild Turkey Federation, and the ISU Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit in order to find the federally-required matching dollars for these projects," he said. "In a tight budgetary time for state governments nationwide, most conservation agencies--including the Iowa DNR-- simply do not have the means to provide the required matching funds. Without help from private partners, or some kind of state legislative assistance, Iowa risks having to turn back any unmatched federal dollars. That would be tragic because it might result in Congress refusing to allocate future funds."

Harr suggested that Iowans who use and enjoy natural resources contact their congressional delegates and thank them for passing the Omnibus Appropriations Act, especially provisions for State Wildlife Grants. "Even though we're having difficulty finding all the necessary match money, significant progress has been made in aiding Iowa's declining wildlife species," he said. "If funding is to continue, we must thank Congress for its efforts and urge our elected federal and state officials to seek more permanent funding for wildlife."

###

NATURAL RESOURCE COMMISSION TO MEET THURSDAY NEAR POLK CITY

DES MOINES – The Natural Resource Commission of the Iowa DNR will meet at 8:30 a.m., March 13, at the Big Creek Shooting Range Training Center, near Polk City. The meeting is open to the public and public participation is scheduled for 10:30 a.m.

The commission and DNR staff will tour the area following the meeting.

Members of the NRC are Joan Schneider, Richard Garrels, Paul Christiansen, Carol Kramer, William Sullivan, Richard Francisco and Janice Marcantonio. The DNR Director is Jeffrey Vonk.

The following is the agenda for the March meeting.

- Approve Agenda
- Approve Minutes of Feb. 13
- Construction Projects
- Land Acquisition
 - Silver Lake Wildlife Management Area, Dickinson County – Land Exchange
 - Stephens State Forest, Appanoose County – Sexton
- Property Taxes Paid in 2002
- Lease Renewals
 - Chapter 18 Lease – West Okoboji, Dickinson County
 - Chapter 18 Leases – Rock Creek State Park, Jasper County
 - Chapter 18 Lease – Missouri River, Woodbury County
- Substitution of Final Rule – Chapters 20, 38, 46, 47 & 50, Titling and Registration of Boats, Snowmobiles and ATVs
- Conservation and Recreation Donations
- Concession Contract – Viking Lake State Park
- Concession Contract Amendment – Casino Marina, Storm Lake
- Brass Bluegill Award
- Central Iowa Fish Hatchery
- Bobcat Population
- Ducks Unlimited Program Presentation
- Giant Canada Goose Program
- Digital Infrared Aerial Photography Program
- Marine Fuel Tax Grant Projects
- Notice of Intended Action – Chapter 15, General License Restrictions
- Research Contract with Northern Iowa Windpower, LLC
- Legislative Update
- General Discussion
- Items for Next Meeting, April 10 Teleconference, if needed, May 8 if not.

For more information, contact Karyn Stone at 515-281-8650.

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IOWA FISHING REPORT

For the week of March 11, 2003

For current information on fishing conditions for your lake or area, contact the office in that district. Phone numbers are listed with each district report.

FINAL FISHING REPORT UNTIL SPRING

Southeast

Mississippi River – Pools 15 – 19: Tailwater fishing for walleye and sauger below lock and dams 15-19 has been good to very good. Most anglers are having success with a jig and minnow but some are catching nice fish with crankbaits rigged on three ways.

Lake Odessa (Louisa): Bluegill fishing in Yankee Chute is fair. The ice is getting thin in several spots, so be careful.

Lake Darling (Washington): Crappies are biting along the cedar tree piles in the middle of the lake. Jigs tipped with a minnow seem to be working best. Ice conditions aren't the best, so take it slow.

Lake Geode (Henry): Fishing has been slow. There is open water by the picnic shelters across from the boat ramp and there are several other areas where ice is on the thin side.

Lake Rathbun (Appanoose): Crappies continue to bite on small tube jigs tipped with wax worms and minnows. Areas with flooded timber or submerged trees have been the most productive.

Lake Miami (Monroe): Bluegills and crappies have been biting on jigs tipped with wax worms.

Lake Keomah (Mahaska): Bluegills and crappies have been hitting on small jigs tipped with wax worms. Use caution because there is some open water in areas the geese have been using.

Lake Sugema (Van Buren): Bluegills and crappies have been hitting on small jigs tipped with wax worms or minnows. Use caution, there are areas of thin ice around the flooded timber.

Lake Wapello (Davis): Bluegills and crappies have been biting on small jigs tipped with wax worms or minnows. The areas with submerged cedar trees and pallets have been the best.

Lake Macbride (Johnson): Anglers are catching crappie and bluegill throughout the lake off the brush piles. Some sorting for sizeable fish is necessary for bluegills and crappies. An occasion walleye has also been caught.

Diamond Lake (Poweshiek): Crappie fishing continues to be fair in the evenings around the brush piles and other habitat. Anglers are reminded that minnow usage is prohibited in this lake.

Coralville Reservoir (Johnson): Fishing continues to be fair to good for crappies, off the deep brush piles and rock walls. Fish are usually caught in 7 to 10-feet of water on jigs tipped with wax worms or minnows. Anglers should pay close attention to the ice conditions and water levels since on March 6 the Army Corps of Engineers began lowering water levels four feet for the spring draw down.

For more information on fishing in southeast Iowa, call the regional office in Brighton at 319-694-2430.

Northeast

Mississippi River Pools 9 to 15: Bluegill fishing fair on **Conway Lake** and **Boxford Lake** in Lansing Area on **Pool 9**. In **Pool 10**, **Scroggins Lake** between Marquette and Prairie Du Chien, anglers are catching some small bluegills. At **Methodist** and **Bussey lakes**, fishing if fair to poor for bluegills. Fishing is slow for bluegills, yellow perch and crappies at **Frenchtown**. However, the size of fish caught has been outstanding. No fishing activity was reported on **Pool 11**. The tailwaters are frozen again with the cold weather over the weekend. Fishing has slowed in **Pools 12 to 15** since the last snowfall. A few fish are being caught in the typical locations. Anglers should note that three ATVs broke through the ice last Friday and Saturday. Use extreme caution on the ice. Don't travel far without checking ice thickness first. If weather follows as the forecasters predict, conditions will be marginal by the end of this week or next week in many areas. Areas with some fishing activity include **Kehough Slough** and **Fish Trap** in **Pool 12**, and **Browns Lake**, the **Green Island area**, **Spring Lake** and **Middle Sabula** in **Pool 13**.

Volga Lake (Fayette): Anglers are catching bluegills on the brush piles along with a few crappies.

Lake Hendricks (Howard): Bluegills are fair on the north end of the lake using small lures tipped with a wax worm.

For current information on trout fishing during the winter, call the **Manchester Trout Hatchery** at 563-927-5736, the **Big Spring Hatchery** at 563-245-1699 and the **Decorah Hatchery** at 563-382-3315.

For information on fishing in northeast Iowa, call the regional office in Manchester at 563-927-3276.

Northwest

Reminder: The walleye, muskie and northern pike season closed Feb. 15 on Spirit Lake, East and West Okoboji in Dickinson County.

Spirit Lake (Dickinson): The lake has poor ice conditions on the east side. Foot travel is recommended. There is a huge pocket of open water from North Marble on south. Use extreme caution. Anglers are catching yellow perch near Marble Beach and in Angler's Bay. Sorting is required to get a nice catch of 10-inch fish. Some bluegills and crappies are being caught at Angler's Bay.

West Okoboji (Dickinson): The best area for crappies and bluegills is in Little Miller's Bay and Little Emerson Bay, fishing in 10 to 12 feet of water. A few are also being caught at the north end.

Lake Minnewashta (Dickinson): Anglers are catching some nice sized bluegills.

Center Lake (Dickinson): Bluegill and crappie continue to be caught along with an occasional walleye.

Silver Lake (Palo Alto): Anglers continue to catch crappies and yellow perch, however the bite has been hot and cold.

Clear Lake (Cerro Gordo): Walleye fishing is fair. The best activity is between 6 and 8:30 p.m. Jigging spoons tipped with minnow heads are working best. Legal-sized

fish have been running 16 to 21 inches. A few yellow bass are being caught at sunrise and sunset on small spoons tipped with minnows or wax worms. The deep hole, near the Island and Lone Tree Point area have been the best places for yellow bass.

For more information on fishing in northwest Iowa, call the regional office in Spirit Lake at 712-336-1840.

Southwest

Three Mile (Union): Bluegills are good on wax worms early in the morning and later in the evening in flooded timber near road beds. Crappies are good on minnows in the morning and later in the evening at brush piles. Walleyes are good on minnows at the upper end of lake. Ice varies from 10 to 13 inches, with some open water areas that the waterfowl are keeping open, so be careful.

Twelve Mile (Union): Walleyes are good in 10 to 15 feet of water using artificial lures. Bluegill, crappie, and small yellow bass are good on minnows and wax worms in early morning and evening hours in flooded timber or areas northeast of the west dock. Ice varies from 10 to 13 inches with some open water areas, so be careful.

Fogle (Ringgold): Fishing is excellent for 6 to 8-inch bluegills and for channel catfish and crappie on wax worms in flooded timber and brush piles.

Icaria (Adams): Channel catfish and largemouth bass are good on wax worms and minnows.

Green Valley (Union): Crappie and bluegill are fair in the east arm. Catfish are good. There is some open water at Green Valley.

Badger Creek (Madison): Fishing is slow, but best time to catch bluegill and crappies is in the morning and evening hours.

West Lake Osceola (Clarke): Fishing is fair for bluegill and crappie, but best in morning and evening hours.

Little River (Decatur): Bluegill, crappie, and walleye are good in flooded timber areas near creek channel.

Slip Bluff (Decatur): Fishing is good for bluegills and crappies beside flooded trees.

Big Creek Lake (Polk): Bluegill fishing has been fair, with most fish taken on small teardrops or kastmasters baited with wax worms. Crappie fishing has been fair, with the best fishing around daybreak and after dark in deeper water using minnows on bare hooks. Walleye fishing has been good using kastmasters and other small jigging spoons, with most walleye below the legal length limit.

Don Williams (Boone): Crappies are fair to good with most fish in 8 to 10-inch range with anglers using primarily minnows. A few bluegills are being also being caught.

Lake Ahquabi (Warren): Bluegill and redear fishing has been fair using wax worms. A few crappies are being caught, but overall it has been slow. Some channel catfish are also being taken with teardrops and wax worms; fish just off the bottom.

Hooper Lake (Warren): Some bluegill and redear have been caught with most fish in 12 to 15 feet of water.

Rock Creek (Jasper): Crappie fishing has been slow using wax worms and minnows. Ice conditions have been spotty with some areas of thin ice near the dam.

Easter Lake (Polk): Crappie fishing has been slow. Most anglers are using wax worms.

Hickory Grove Lake (Story): Some crappie and bluegill have been caught, although fishing is generally slow to fair using smaller lures tipped with wax worms and jigs.

Saylorville Tailwater (Polk): Anglers are catching smaller northern pike and a few walleye in the tailwaters.

Greenfield (Adair): Bluegills are good on jigs tipped with wax worms fished around structure in 10 to 20 feet of water. Ice conditions are poor.

Viking (Montgomery): Bluegill and crappie are good on teardrops tipped with wax worms and minnows. Best action is early in the morning and before sunset. Ice conditions are poor.

Farm Ponds: Ice fishing is good for bluegill on wax worms. Many ponds have poor ice conditions.

For more information on fishing in southwest Iowa, call the regional office in Lewis at 712-769-2587.

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